

For Tod Powell, San Francisco Chronicle
From Howard Zahniser, U. S. Biological Survey
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HJ*

Stanley P. Young breezed into what he calls my bear's nest here in the Chronicle building yesterday. Stan runs the U. S. Biological Survey's division of game management down in Washington. I didn't know what he was up to here, making a grand entry flanked by these two uniformed officers of the duck laws, Hugh Worcester and "Bud" Elder, and trailing along Howard Zahniser, pencil pusher and broadgabber in the Survey's information work.

"A delegation to see you, Mr. Tod Powell."

Well, if you can get a delegation to talking one at a time you can find out something. It seems that Young has just pulled an expedition out of Old Mexico. There are mountain lions down in the Carmen Mountains, and there's something about ~~man~~ those old cougars that gets Stan. If it isn't one thing, it's another. This time he wanted pictures, but not just pictures. He wanted the old prince of predators, as he calls it, to take his own picture--portrait by the artist, you know.

And he got what he wanted, night-time pictures of the cougar, and the bobcat, deer, and rabbit, too.

"How'd you do it?" I asked him.

"Well," he says, "Tappan Gregory and Robert Sturgis, from the Chicago Academy of Sciences, set up their cameras and their flashlights and connected them with a treadle. As soon as anything stepped on that treadle, flash, click, and there's your picture. All I did was to make the old prince step on it, strut his stuff, you know, before the camera."

That's all. That made me think of the soft job the hod carrier thought he had. "Swell job," he says, "all I have to do is to carry the bricks up to the fourth floor. They do all the work up there."

Anyhow, Young got his pictures and a group of scientific specimens and a good idea of what old Mother Nature's West looked like before the grass-eating, erosion specialists wore out the sod with overgrazing.

Columbines galore. Gramma grass a plenty. Grazing enough to keep a pack horse going without grain. Deer. And mountain lions.

Man!
~~Man!~~ he made me homesick.

So I dropped that and started talking about ducks.

It's easy to get Young talking about ducks, too.

"I think we're going to bring the ducks back," ~~has~~ he said. "Our program seems to be working swell. We're reducing the annual kill to save the breeding stock, and we're trying to give the birds more marshes where they can raise their families. And it's working. We think there's an increase this year--not enough to shout about, but if the hunters go along with us enough to build on."

I took a glance at those two boys in uniform, and I thought about the way they're helping the hunters go along.

"We're with you," I told Young, and he looked me straight in the eye and said, "Well, Old Timer, that's what's going to do it."

I think he's right.

But Young had to hurry on. He's helping the Bureau's field men to iron out their troubles, softening their griefs, and getting them all set for November first. And he had a lot of men to see before he gets back to the capital.

So ~~kinda~~ I'm hoping to see him again, some other breezy day.